

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BDIS, BG, SY
SUBJECT: JAMES COMYNS

1. DAMASCUS ATTORNEY JACQUES HAKIM, REPRESENTING SYRIAN CEREALS OFFICE, AND BERGE SETREKIAN OF NEW YORK LAW FIRM WHITMAN AND RANSOM BRIEFED EMBASSY COMOFF 2/17 ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN COMYNS AFFAIR.

2. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT COMYNS USED FALSE DOCUMENTS TO CASH THE L/CS WITH CHASE MANHATTAN, PERHAPS IN CONNIVANCE WITH AN OFFICIAL OF THAT BANK. THEY BELIEVE THAT GARRITY, OF EMERALD INDUSTRIES, WAS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE FRAUD. NOT A NICTIM OF COMYNS. THEY UNDERSTAND THAT COMYNS IS BANKRUPT, HAS SOME TWENTY OUTSTANDING JUDGMENTS AGAINST HIM, AND WILL PROBABLY BE PROSECUTED IN THE U.S. FOR FRAUD IN THE PRESENT CASE INVOLVING THE CEREALS OFFICE.

3. COMYNS HAS INFORMED THE SYRIANS THAT UPON PAYMENT OF 300,000 DOLLARS, PLUS SURRENDER OF HIS PERFORMANCE BOND (TOTAL APPROXIMATELY 600,000 DOLLARS), COMYNS WOULD AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF THE "ERINE PATERA" CARGO OF JUTE ORIGINALLY DESTINED FOR SYRIA. HAKIM LEARNED OF THIS OFER THROUGH COMYNS' GREEK SHIPPING
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AGENT, KANDIA.

4. HAKIM HAS RECOMMENDED TO THE CEREALS OFFICE THAT IT ACCEPT COMYNS' OFFER, DESPITE IT S SEEMING INEQUITY. REASONS: CEREALS OFFICE IS ALREADY OUT NEARLY 3M. DOLLARS AND HAS NEITHER THE JUTE BAGS NOR THE TARPAULINES FOR WHICH IT CONTRACTED WITH COMYNS. HAKIM ESTIMATES THAT

COMYNS COULD DRAG OUT LITIGATION FOR ONE-THREE YEARS,
AT AN ADDITIONAL COST TO THE SYRIANS OF ANOTHER HALF
MILLION DOLLARS. ALTHOUGH THE SYRIANS WOULD WIN IN COURT,
HAKIM ARGUES, THEY WOULD LOSE MORE TIME AND MONEY THAN
THE EFFORT IS WORTH. BETTER TO COUGH UP THE ADDITIONAL
CASH, LAY HANDS
ON THE GOODS, AND TRY TO BRING COMYNS
LATER TO COURT IN THE U.S. CEREALS OFFICE HAS NOT YET DECIDED.

5. AS FOR THE TARPAULINS, THE LAWYERS ARE NOT SURE THEY
EXIST, ALTHOUGH COMYNS CLAIMS THEY ARE UNDER HIS CONTROL
IN CALCUTTA.

6. HAKIM AND SETREKAIN UNDERSTAND THAT CHASE IS MOST
ANXIOUS TO HAVE THIS MATTER RESOLVED BEFORE THE DAMASCUS
VISIT MARCH 8/9 OF DAVID ROCKEFELLER. THEY THINK THE BANK
IS AFRAID THE SYRIANS WILL RAISE THE MATTER DURING
ROCKEFULLER'S VISIT. EMBASSY, WHICH IS ONLY
MARGINALLY INVOLVED IN THIS PRIVATE VISIT, HAS HEARD
NOTHING FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOURCES TO CONFIRM THESE
ALLEGED FEARS.

MURPHY

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